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Senate

IN RECOGNITION OF THE EFFORTS OF THE DELAWARE MENTORING COUNCIL

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the good work of the Delaware Mentoring Council and to celebrate the efforts of mentors across our great country. With the designation of January as National Mentoring Month, we focus national attention on the need for mentors, as well as how each of us--individuals, businesses, schools and community groups--can work together to increase the number of mentors and assure brighter futures for our young people.

Mentors serve as role models, advocates, friends, and advisors. Numerous studies document that mentors help young people augment social skills, enhance emotional well-being, improve cognitive skills, and plan for the future. For some children, having a caring adult mentor to turn to for guidance and encouragement can make the crucial difference between success and failure in life.

Delaware has been showing communities across the country the power of mentoring for quite a while. Mentoring has become an integral part of our school system in Delaware and is one of the keys to improving academic achievement among at-risk students.

As Governor, I helped recruit thousands of mentors as part of a statewide effort and was actively involved in recruiting individuals, churches, service clubs, students, and corporations to help in mentoring Delaware's at-risk children. I first experienced the joy of mentoring in 1997 when I became a mentor to Darryl Burton, a fifth grader at Wilmington's Warner Elementary School. More than 5 years later, we now meet at Delcastle High School, where he is a freshman, every week during the school year. I know from personal experience that there are few things more rewarding than making a difference in the life of a child. Literally hundreds of mentors have said to me of their mentoring experience over the past 6 years, "I know I'm helping the young person that I mentor, but I get even more out of it than they do."

We are making great strides in the First State in helping thousands of additional students realize their full potential, along with Delaware's rigorous academic standards. The Delaware Mentoring Council is, in large part, leading the way. We must continue to work to level the playing field and give every child the tools they need to succeed in school and in life.

I am proud to be part of Delaware's army of mentors. We know that there are thousands of other students in our schools who would benefit greatly from having another positive role model in their lives, so I urge others to join us. For a child living in the shadows of life, an hour of our time can make a lifetime of difference for that child and for each of us.